

## Home Circle.

### REPENTANCE.

BY L. V. S.

I sit by the fire-musing,  
The flickering light grows dim;  
With repentant tears  
For the wasted years,  
I breathe a prayer to Him.  
Riches, fame, all I have sought  
Thou hast freely given me,  
And I have lived without a thought  
Of Thee or of eternity.  
Dear Savior, take my hand to-day,  
My feeble footsteps guide,  
Up the steep and narrow way  
That leads unto Thy side.  
And if I falter as I trace  
Those steps Thou traced in blood,  
Show me the light of Thy dear face  
To lead me on to God.  
I ask for no conspicuous seat  
Where those "many mansions" be,  
Only humbly to sit at Thy feet,  
Content if but close to Thee.  
And while I sit here musing,  
The flickering light burns low;  
Yet the room seems bright  
With a heavenly light  
Which the Savior sends, I know.  
—*The Christian Intelligencer.*

### OUR STARRY FLAG.

Every people has some emblem which is the symbol to them of all that is good and great in their country, the embodiment of the principles and institutions which place their native land far above all other lands in the love and veneration of its inhabitants. In ancient Athens it was the image of their goddess Minerva, that meant love of country, for she led their armies in war, and under her protection their industries flourished in times of peace. We can image the far-famed Spartan mother standing with her son before the enshrined image of the goddess Venus and praying that the training he had received for war might render him indifferent to hardships or suffering while the glory of his city was threatened and the honor of his goddess in danger.

In modern times this patriotic love and reverence is centered in the flag. In this country there is more than common reason why the flag shall be honored and admired. It is intrinsically beautiful, with its brilliant colors and simple, expressive design—which cannot be said of many of the world's flags. Its history is clean. It is a flag of peace. It has never been carried by any army of oppression which went forth for conquest, animated only by greed of gain. It has never floated cruelly over scenes of ruin, plunder, and carnage, for the sake of ministering to the ambition of kings. But where high prin-

ciples were in danger, where the liberty of its humblest subject was touched, where oppression or tyranny dared intrude, there its stars have always blazed with a wrathful flame, and its red stripes have symbolized the punishment our country's enemies should receive at our hands.

Love it, then, patriots. It means all that is good and true and pure and beautiful in a land of freedom. Defend it with your lives, if need be, as your fathers did before you. It is far worthier of self-sacrifice and heroic devotion than any goddess of the olden time.—*The Spirit of '76.*

### OH, THE FOLLY OF IT!

The following little story from *Wide Awake* is not new, but its truth is vouched for, and its lesson is so clearly taught that it is worth repeating over and over:

Two men once stood at the same table in a large factory in Philadelphia at the same trade. Having an hour for their nooning every day, each undertook to use it in accomplishing a definite purpose—each persevered for about the same number of months, and each won success at last.

One of these two mechanics used his daily leisure hour in working out the invention of a machine for sawing a block of wood into almost any desired shape. When his invention was complete he sold the patent for a fortune, changed his apron for a broadcloth suit, and moved out of a tenement house into a brown-stone mansion.

The other man—what did he do? Well, he spent an hour each day during most of the year in the very difficult undertaking of teaching a little dog to stand on its hind feet and dance a jig. To be sure he succeeded, but what then? At last accounts he was working ten hours a day at the same trade and at his old wages, blaming his luck for the hard fate that kept him poor, while his fellow workman had become rich.

### "BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN."

This saying, like many other things spoken by our Lord, is directly opposed to human theories and maxims. We do not count it a blessing to have the heart heavy with unshed tears nor the eyes weary with weeping. We would say: Blessed are they upon whose horizon the morning sun should rise without a cloud, ascend to noon in undimmed brightness, and sink at evening in hues of purple and gold.

But He from whose lips the beatitudes fell with such gentleness and grace understood, from a point of view both human

and divine, the true philosophy of life. He was Himself a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and yet his joy was so rich and deep that He prayed it might remain in the hearts of His followers, that their joy might thus be "full." No one ever lived upon this sorrow-stricken earth who knew what it means truly to mourn better than did our blessed Saviour. He wept beside the grave of Lazarus, whom He loved, with the bereaved sisters. Hear that sigh from His sympathetic soul as he touched the deaf ears and mute lips; see Him weeping over Jerusalem and saying, "How often would I have gathered you under My protection, but ye would not;" see Him wearing a crown of thorns and denied by one of His nearest friends. He did not say it was blessed to mourn without having known the pain of a mourner's heart.

But He knew that the capacity for suffering and the capacity for enjoyment are inseparably united. A nature incapable of feeling keenest grief is incapable of the highest joy. Here is a man with his moral sense benumbed by dissipation and vice. He laughs over his revelries and forgets the sorrow that has fallen on his home in brutish self-indulgence. Mother or wife feels the keen edge of the sorrow pierce her inmost being, and she mourns not only for the grief that has befallen the household; but for the sin and shame of that one who, in unfeeling selfishness, leaves her to bear the burden alone. But the coarse, hard nature is not the blessed one. Rather, it is the tender soul with its deep susceptibility to pain. Here is a young and thoughtless person, or it may be one in mature life, who never feels a pang of regret for anything wrong he may have done. He laughs at the kindly admonition which bids him pause and consider and be sorry, and goes on to grosser sin and a more obdurate heart. Here is another who, having seen himself in the light in which a pure God sees him, repents, and with sincere sorrow confesses and forsakes his sin. It is plain to see which of these two is the blessed one.

Jesus knew also that out of sorrow rightly borne the richest graces of character grow. Gold is at its highest value only when the fire has burned away the dross. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." By the way of the cross His own triumphs were won, and the disciple must be as his Master. To him that "overcometh" it is granted to sit with Him upon a throne.

Humility is a great virtue, and it always associates itself with plain things.—*Neel.*